

dearly, but her spirit will live on to inspire generations to come. She made a positive difference for Texas and for our nation. In my book she represented the very best of political leadership.

In an era when the good ol' boy system denied opportunities to women and racial minorities, she broke down barriers to ensure that public service would be open to all. In an era when self-important politicians too often took themselves too seriously, she used good humor to keep our feet on the ground, even as we were rolling in laughter.

As Governor of the state she loved, her accomplishments were many, whether in improving education or health care or job opportunities. Yet, like the best of political leaders, her greatest legacy will be having inspired others to be their best, to reach for their dreams, and to make life better for our neighbors.

I have no doubt that after all of us in this House are gone and forgotten, the legacy of Ann Richards will be carrying on through the countless lives of those who were inspired to public service by the touch of this great American.

On a personal note, it was an honor for me to know Ann Richards, especially since she graduated from Baylor University and her parents lived in my hometown of Waco, Texas. It was back in Waco, often outside the limelight of the press, that I admired Ann Richards' deep love and respect for average working families. She understood that they are the backbone of our nation.

Those of us honored to call Ann Richards our friend, and those of us whose lives were touched by her commitment to equality and public service know that there will never be anyone quite like her. That is why we miss her so.

Somehow, I just have to believe that Governor Richards wanted to witness from a heavenly seat the swearing in of Speaker PELOSI as the first woman Speaker of the U.S. House. Or, perhaps the Good Lord just wanted Ann Richards to be by His side when that history was made.

Either way, I have no doubt that heaven is a little funnier place with Ann Richards there and that our nation is a better place because of her time here on earth.

To the Richards family, I want to express a heart-felt "thank you" for sharing your special loved one with all of us for so many years. Our memories of her will inspire us to be better, to do more for years to come.

Mr. RODRIGUEZ. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in strong support of H. Res. 42. Anne Richards's devotion to the state of Texas deserves our highest honor and commendation. Her work to promote the rights of women in politics, devotion to equality and her never-failing drive to better the lives of her constituents made her an iconic figure in Texas politics.

Governor Richards began her political career in the 1970's fighting for equality. As an advocate for female politicians, she managed Sarah Weddington's successful bid to become a member of the Texas State House of Representatives. She then joined State Representative Weddington as a legislative assistant in 1974, during this time she also participated in Wilhelmina Delco's campaign to become the first African-American to represent Austin in the state legislature. Not content to rest there, she provided training sessions across the state for female candidates and managers.

She would continue this fight for equality for the next 20 years.

In 1982 she was elected to the post of state treasurer becoming the first woman elected to state-wide office in more than 50 years. She devoted herself to the modernization of the state treasury and to earning the greatest possible interest for the state of Texas. According to one estimate, the treasury earned 1.8 billion dollars under her leadership, representing a huge improvement over her predecessor. During her tenure she displayed the incredible wit that made her such a powerful public speaker and one of the most popular figures in Texas politics.

After two terms as state treasurer she was elected Governor of the state of Texas in 1990. What she accomplished in her four years as Governor was nothing short of amazing. Among the achievements for which we are honoring her here today, she revitalized the Texan economy, achieving growth during a period of national economic decline. She revamped the Texas prison system to improve rehabilitation for inmates and to better protect the citizens of Texas by establishing a substance abuse program for inmates, working to expand capacity and reduce prison overpopulation, and reducing the number of violent offenders released. The Texas Lottery was also instituted during Governor Richards' time in office as a means to supplement school financing.

Education and school financing were focal points of her Governorship. She worked tirelessly to make school funding more equitable across districts and championed "sitebased management" programs to decentralize school administration.

Of her nearly 3,000 government appointments, 46 percent were female, 15 percent were black, 20 percent were Hispanic and 2 percent were Asian American. I rise today to honor her commitment to diversity, her battle for equality, and her lifetime of service to the state of Texas and the United States of America.

Mr. SHAYS. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I want to thank Mr. SHAYS for his accommodation and would urge passage of H. Res. 42.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from Illinois (Mr. DAVIS) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 42.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

PELL GRANT EQUITY ACT OF 2007

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 990) to provide all low-income students with the same opportunity to receive a Pell Grant by eliminating the tuition sensitivity provision in the Pell Grant program, as amended.

The Clerk read as follows:

H.R. 990

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pell Grant Equity Act of 2007".

SEC. 2. TUITION SENSITIVITY.

Section 401(b)(3) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1070a(b)(3)) is amended by adding at the end the following new subparagraph:

"(C) This paragraph shall not apply to the determination of a student's basic grant for the 2007–2008 academic year."

SEC. 3. GUARANTEE AGENCY COLLECTION RETENTION.

Clause (ii) of section 428(c)(6)(A) of the Higher Education Act of 1965 (20 U.S.C. 1078(c)(6)(A)(ii)) is amended to read as follows:

"(ii) an amount equal to 24 percent of such payments for use in accordance with section 422B, except that—

"(I) beginning October 1, 2003 and ending September 30, 2007, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting '23 percent' for '24 percent'; and

"(II) beginning October 1, 2007 and ending September 30, 2008, this subparagraph shall be applied by substituting '22 percent' for '24 percent'."

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) and the gentleman from California (Mr. McKEON) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER).

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Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Today, Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 990, the Pell Grant Equity Act of 2007.

This is a bill that is designed to adjust an inequity in the current law that works against the interest of many college students in those States that have low tuition.

At a time when we have seen tuition and fees of public colleges and universities increase significantly, there is a notable exception to that trend, and that is that California community colleges recently decreased their tuition and fees from \$26 a credit to \$20 a credit. For a student taking 13 credits for two semesters, they save \$520 in tuition for the year. This is almost unheard of in a day of skyrocketing college costs. Unfortunately, a provision in the Higher Education Act penalizes students attending low-cost institutions, such as California's community colleges.

The provision known as "tuition sensitivity" reduces the Pell Grant for the neediest of students attending higher education institutions with the lowest tuition. The result is that thousands of low-income students receive a lesser Pell Grant.

The Pell Grant Equity Act eliminates this discriminating provision in the law, ensuring that students receive the full amount of the Pell Grants they are entitled to receive. This is a very important bill for these students and for their families.

This is legislation that my colleague, Mr. McKEON, the senior Republican on the committee, worked very hard last year to get into the Higher Education Act. It was passed on the floor of the Congress. He worked very hard to bring this matter to the attention of all of the Members of Congress on both sides of the aisle, but as you know, that legislation was not passed in the end, and that is why we are here today because this has an immediate impact on those students who find themselves in this situation. And I want to thank him for all of the effort that he made to adjust this inequity in the law over the last couple of years as we have tried to deal with this within the Higher Education Act.

This bill is a 1-year fix, and we do so because we anticipate that this would cover the upcoming academic year. And we would hope to be able to make the permanent changes when we reauthorize the Higher Education Act in this Congress.

According to the Congressional Research Service, our bill will help approximately 96,000 students receive an average of \$100 more in a Pell Grant aid. Sometimes that doesn't sound like a lot of money, but in grant aid to these students and these families, this is an important amount of money because it is not just the tuition that is going down, it is other costs continue to go up.

This increase will help make a real difference for these students in meeting not just their tuition costs, but the costs of their books, their supplies, transportation, room and board, and expenses that quickly add up.

We know this is an issue because we have received letters and heard stories from the community colleges, from the students and from their families. It is a situation where you can find two siblings, one at Cal State school and another at a nearby community college. Both students take similar courses, enrolled full-time, live at home, commute to colleges, both have filed Federal financial aid forms and have an expected family contribution of zero. So both qualify for the maximum Pell Grant. Due to the current rules, the sibling attending the community college will receive \$402 less, even though the educational costs overall are the same for those two individuals.

That is why we need to pass this legislation today. It has strong bipartisan support. And it will keep the Pell Grant as a strong part of our Federal student aid program targeted to those in the most need.

With that, Mr. Speaker, I would like to reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, I rise in strong support of H.R. 990, the Pell Grant Equity Act.

I thank my friend and colleague, Chairman MILLER, for his work on this legislation. I also thank Ranking Member KELLER of the Higher Education Subcommittee and Chairman HINOJOSA for working with us on this measure.

The Pell Grant Equity Act will repeal a Federal rule known as "tuition sensitivity." This arcane rule reduces the annual maximum Pell Grant for students attending institutions with very low tuition charges.

In a time when we are trying to keep the cost of education down, we penalize students that choose to go to a school that is charging less tuition. It seems like we have it really mixed up, and I am glad this bill is coming out to help us change that. Simply put, Mr. Speaker, a student should not be forced to sacrifice grant aid because of their choice of one institution over another.

As Congress and the President work to continue improving student aid programs, it is illogical that certain students who may otherwise be eligible for a maximum Pell Grant won't get it simply because of where they go to school. Moreover, repealing this rule takes away an incentive for some low-cost institutions to raise their tuition in order for their students to become eligible for the maximum Pell award.

The tuition sensitivity rule is estimated to impact between 90,000 and 100,000 students each year, with these students losing hundreds of dollars in grant aid annually, the students that need it the most.

With many California community colleges reducing their cost of attendance this semester, the tuition sensitivity rule is expected to have an even more substantial impact for students in that State if not corrected.

So I am especially pleased, just as I am sure Chairman MILLER is, that this measure will benefit many of those seeking postsecondary education in our home State.

Mr. Speaker, I must say that as much as I support this bill, I wish it could have been the law of the land much sooner. This measure was included in the College Access and Opportunity Act, which the House passed last year to reauthorize the Higher Education Act. Similarly, had House Republicans, or anyone else for that matter, been able to offer this as an amendment to H.R. 5 earlier this year, I would have done so.

As is often the case in Washington, it is better late than never. I am pleased to support this measure which helps students and is fully paid for in accordance with the budget rules.

Again, I thank my colleagues. And I hope we can find more opportunities for bipartisan cooperation on college access down the road.

Mr. Speaker, I yield to the ranking member of the subcommittee, Mr. KELLER, such time as he may consume.

Mr. KELLER of Florida. I thank the gentleman for yielding.

Mr. Speaker, I rise today as the ranking member on the Higher Education Committee and a strong supporter of the Pell Grant program to urge my colleagues to vote "yes" on the Pell Grant Equity Act of 2007.

The rationale for this legislation is pretty simple: It is unfair that 100,000

college students are penalized for attending community colleges with low tuition rates. These students will now be able to use the additional \$108 in Pell funding, on average, to pay for legitimate education expenses beyond tuition, such as books and mandatory lab fees in their science classes.

At a time when college tuition is skyrocketing across the Nation, we should praise and not punish those community colleges who are doing their part to keep tuition low and reward those students who are going to those colleges who otherwise wouldn't have a chance at the American Dream of a college education.

I want to praise Chairman MILLER and Chairman HINOJOSA as well as Ranking Member McKEON for their leadership and moving this legislation along. I think it is a great piece of bipartisan legislation that deserves all of our support, and I urge all of my colleagues on both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" on this bill.

Mr. McKEON. Mr. Speaker, again, I want to thank Chairman MILLER for bringing this legislation, for his kind words, and the opportunity to work together, something that will benefit students who are in great need of this extra help.

Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, earlier in the first few hours of this session, this Congress took a bipartisan vote to cut interest rates for the neediest students who are borrowing money. Those same group of students, many of them are still eligible for the Pell Grant. This action we take today, again on a bipartisan basis, I think will be very helpful to these students and to their families as, again, they try to put together the resources necessary so that they can begin their advanced education in the higher education system in this case. Hopefully in community colleges, they will continue to try to figure out, along with the State legislatures, how to lower the cost of that college. And this would provide an additional incentive, since they know now that those students will not be punished in a sense because they are going to a lower cost college at that time.

I would like to thank the staff of both committees for all of the work they did on this, for the senior Republican, Mr. KELLER, on the subcommittee, and Mr. McKEON on the full committee, and to Mr. HINOJOSA, the chairman of the subcommittee, for all of their work. We look forward to a quick passage here and hopefully a speedy passage in the Senate.

Mr. HARE. Mr. Speaker, part of our job in Congress is to ensure that every American has the right to a higher education. Unfortunately, a provision in the Higher Education Act makes it difficult for people of low incomes who attend schools with low tuitions to receive the assistance they need.

I rise in strong support of the Pell Grant Equity Act, which provides low-income students

the opportunity to go to college by eliminating the "tuition sensitivity provision." This provision prohibits maximum Pell grant awards to students attending low-tuition institutions of higher education even if their income is low enough to otherwise qualify for the maximum award.

As implemented by the U.S. Department of Education, "tuition sensitivity" is intended to reduce the Pell grant for low-income students who attend very low tuition schools as a cost-saving measure. Unfortunately, the students most negatively impacted by this policy are the poorest students who still cannot afford the lower tuition.

As I have been saying throughout my district this past week, education is an investment not an expenditure. We must invest in our students now or be forced to pay more later. We can start this investment by passing the Pell Grant Equity Act, allowing approximately 96,000 of our poorest students to receive the financial assistance they need in the upcoming academic year.

Ms. LORETTA SANCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 990—The Pell Grant Equity Act of 2007. This legislation is a simple measure to reduce the real and perceived barriers to a higher education for many low-income families across the United States.

Community colleges and other low-cost institutions offer life-changing educational opportunities for motivated students. Pell grant recipients are by definition motivated.

The Pell grant program works as a contract between the Federal Government and the individual. The Government says, "we will provide you with the means to get a higher education if you desire to invest in yourself."

Removing the tuition sensitivity provision of the Higher Education Act will help students cover the full cost of attending college, which is significantly higher than tuition alone.

For over 30 years, Congress has consistently increased funding available to the Pell grant program and increased the maximum grant that each student can receive. Why? Because the program works. Pell grant recipients regularly go on to succeed in jobs with career potential and upward mobility.

Increased access to higher education is an important goal for the Congress because having an educated workforce is essential to our country's future. As former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan once said to me, "if our people are educated there isn't a problem we can't solve. If they aren't, there isn't one that we can." Eliminating tuition sensitivity from the Pell grant program is a positive step towards making college education available to everyone who wants one, and there isn't a higher goal than that.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 990, which will provide all low-income students with the same opportunity to receive a Pell grant by eliminating the "tuition sensitivity" provision in the Pell grant program. The Federal Pell grant is need-based aid that serves as the foundation of a student's financial aid package. In fiscal year 2006, more than 5 million undergraduate students received the Pell grant scholarship, with 74 percent of these recipients having a combined family income below \$30,000.

Mr. Speaker, under current law Pell grants are awarded to students based on the difference between the appropriated maximum

Pell grant award and the student's expected family contribution, which is a measure of the student's and their family's ability to pay for education expenses.

The "tuition sensitivity" provision of the Pell grant comes into effect when the appropriated award is above \$2,700.00. The provision then reduces the Pell grant scholarship, received by the poorest students attending institutions with the lowest tuition. As a result of this provision, two students with the same low-income background and family expenses could be awarded different amounts for the Pell grant although they are both entitled to receive the maximum amount.

Although both students share the same economic hardships, the student attending the college with the lower tuition would receive a smaller Pell grant, thus requiring their expected personal and family expenses to the institution to rise. However, if these same two students attended universities with matching tuition expenses, the award amounts would be equal.

Just because a student attends a school with low tuition, that does not mean that he or she can expend more from their personal and family income. A needy student should receive the same amount regardless of their institution's tuition.

Mr. Speaker, I support H.R. 990, which would provide all low-income students with the same opportunity to receive a Pell grant by eliminating the tuition sensitivity provision in the Pell grant. Every student in our Nation who plans to further their education, whether at our Nation's most expensive or least expensive schools, deserves that opportunity. Our Federal Government has made the provisions to financially assist students, especially those from low-income families, in their quest to attend college and we must ensure that every student has this opportunity.

Mr. GENE GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today in support of H.R. 990, the Pell Grant Equity Act.

This important piece of legislation would amend the Higher Education Act of 1965 to provide all low-income students with the same opportunity to receive a Pell grant by eliminating the tuition sensitivity provision in the Pell grant program.

Current law prohibits maximum Pell grant awards to students attending low-tuition higher education institutions even if their income is low enough to otherwise qualify for the maximum award.

As the husband of a retired high-school teacher, I have always been a strong advocate for education.

Unfortunately, the high costs of a college education prohibit many low-income students from receiving a higher degree.

Pell grants provide low-income students with their best opportunity to attend college, and we must support financial aid programs like this in order to help as many students as possible succeed and receive a college degree.

Higher education is the best way to ensure our children and grandchildren have a promising future regardless of socio-economic status.

I thank my colleagues for supporting this bill.

Mr. HINOJOSA. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join Chairman MILLER and Ranking Members MCKEON and KELLER in cosponsoring the Pell Grant Equity Act. I would like to thank

them for their leadership in bringing this bill forward without delay.

Currently low-income students who attend low-cost institutions have their Pell Grants reduced because of the provision called "tuition sensitivity" in current law. It is contrary to common sense and our shared goals of providing access to higher education for low-income students to systematically reduce the grant aid for the neediest students who often attend low-cost institutions because they are more affordable.

According to the Congressional Research Service, our action today will benefit 96,000 low-income students and increase their Pell grant by an average of \$108. When you are a low-income student, every penny counts and this increase will make a real difference.

The colleges in my congressional district serve some of the lowest income students and families in the Nation. They work very hard to keep tuition low and limit increases to a minimum. This legislation will ensure that their efforts to contain costs are not undone by aid policy that reduces the Pell Grant because the institution charges low tuition.

The Pell Grant Equity Act will immediately lift tuition sensitivity for the upcoming academic year. As we move towards the reauthorization of the Higher Education Act, we will make this repeal permanent and put all low-income students on an equal footing in the Pell grant program.

I look forward to continuing this spirit of bipartisanship as we consider the rest of the Higher Education Act and thank my colleagues for treating this issue with the sense of urgency it deserves.

I strongly encourage all my colleagues to support this legislation.

Mr. GEORGE MILLER of California. Mr. Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from California (Mr. GEORGE MILLER) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 990, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

The title of the bill was amended so as to read: "To provide all low-income students with the same opportunity to receive a Pell Grant by suspending the tuition sensitivity provision in the Pell Grant program."

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

COMMENDING THE UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA TROJAN FOOTBALL TEAM FOR ITS VICTORY IN THE 2007 ROSE BOWL

Mr. DAVIS of Illinois. Mr. Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and agree to the resolution (H. Res. 126) commending the University of Southern California Trojan football team for its victory in the 2007 Rose Bowl.

The Clerk read as follows:

H. RES. 126

Whereas the University of Southern California (USC) Trojan football team achieved many historic accomplishments during the 2006 season;